

Mission Nuestra Senora de la Purisima
Concepcion de Acuna, Convent
807 Mission Road
San Antonio
Bexar County
Texas

HABS No. TX-319-B

HABS
TEX
15-SANT.V.
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PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D.C. 20240

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

MISSION NUESTRA SENORA DE LA PURISIMA
CONCEPCION DE ACUNA, CONVENT

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Location: 807 Mission Road, San Antonio, Bexar County, Texas.

Present Owner: Roman Catholic Archdiocese of San Antonio.

Present Use: Public museum.

Significance: The convent, which is adjoined to the church's south side, is significant architecturally as physical evidence of building practices and techniques of the Spanish colonial period.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: Circa 1756.
2. Original and subsequent owners: See Mission Nuestra Senora de la Purisima Concepcion de Acuna, HABS No. TX-319.
3. Original plans and construction: There was an original two-story stone convent with living quarters and offices. The present 1756 one-story convent replaced it.

In 1772 the convent was described in an inventory conducted by Saenz. It was a long one-story structure with the cloister attached to the west side of the former. The cloister had arched thruways. One of these thruways led to the cemetery which was enclosed by an abode wall in front of the church. There was a workshop in the space between the main entrance to the convent and the church. On the south end of the cloister was the refectory with an entrance to the kitchen. It measured 6.5 varas long and 3 varas wide. Attached to the refectory was a cell 9 varas long and 5 varas wide with an alcove. Another cell was in the cloister, and it probably opened into an interior courtyard.

Fray Morfi reported in 1778 that the convent was "comfortable and spacious, though with low ceilings."

This building was in ruins by the middle of the 19th century and has been partially reconstructed in this century.

- B. Historical Context: See Mission Nuestra Senora de la Purisima Concepcion de Acuna, HABS No. TX-319, for partial information on the convent.

PART II. ARCHITECTURAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: The convent is one long rectangular structure attached to the south side of the front part of the church. A tunnel vault roof shelters it.
2. Condition of fabric: Good; presently well maintained.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Overall dimensions: Approximately 40' x 85'.
2. Foundation: Probably rubble limestone and lime mortar.
3. Walls: Rubble limestone and lime mortar.
4. Structural system, framing: Load bearing masonry walls reinforced with buttresses; tunnel vaulted roof with round arch-rings.
5. Doorways and doors: None original; wood lintels, wood door paneled in "Spanish" style. Openings very low.
6. Windows: None.
7. Roof: Masonry tunnel vaults; lime stucco exterior.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plan: Three rectangular rooms are joined by doorways, and all open onto the cloister. Additional room is adjoined to the north room on the east.
2. Flooring: Modern flagstone.
3. Wall and ceiling finish: Plastered; traces of fresco.
4. Doors: Modern wood replacements.
5. Lighting: Electric fixtures.

Prepared by: John C. Garner, Jr.
Director, Bexar County Architecture Survey
1969

PART III. PROJECT INFORMATION

The San Antonio project was undertaken by the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) in the summer of 1968, and was made possible with funds from HABS and two sponsors, the Bexar County Historical Survey Committee and the San Antonio Conservation Society. Under the direction of James Massey, Chief of HABS, the project was carried out by Wesley I. Shank (Iowa State University), project supervisor, and by student assistant architects, Charles W. Barrow (University of Texas); Les Beilinson (University of Miami); William H. Edwards (University of Illinois); and Larry D. Hermesen (Iowa State University) at the HABS field office in the former Ursuline Academy buildings, San Antonio. John C. Garner, Jr., Director of Bexar County Architecture Survey, did the outside work on the written documentaries. Susan McCown, a HABS staff historian in the Washington D.C. office, edited the written data in 1983, for preparation of transmittal to the Library of Congress.

The 1983 photographs of the convent are part of the 1983 San Antonio Missions recording project, which was sponsored by the Southwest Regional Office, National Park Service. John Lowe of the HABS/HAER Office, Washington, D.C., took the photographs.

ADDENDUM TO
MISSION NUESTRA SEÑORA DE LA PURISIMA
CONCEPCION DE ACUNA, CONVENT
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